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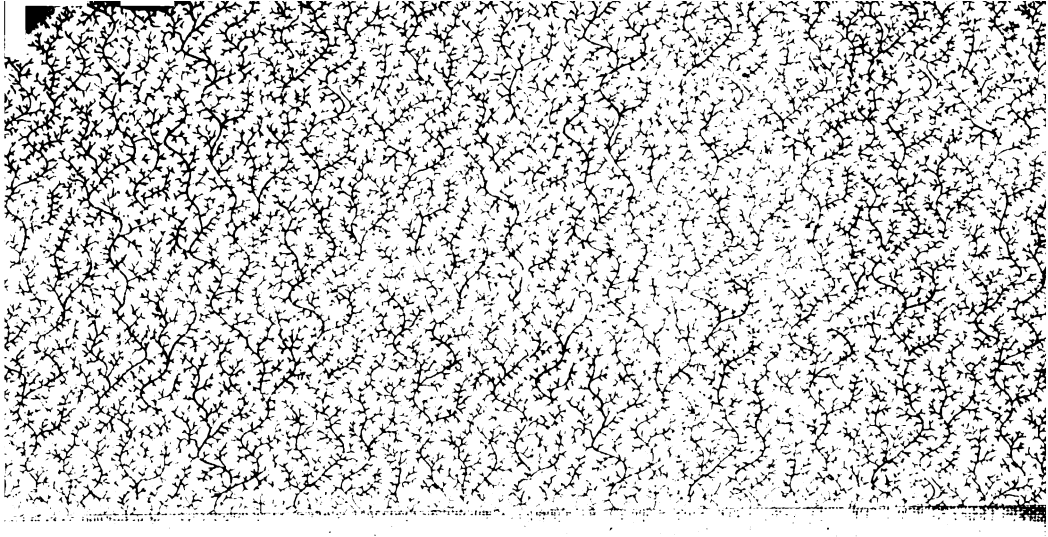

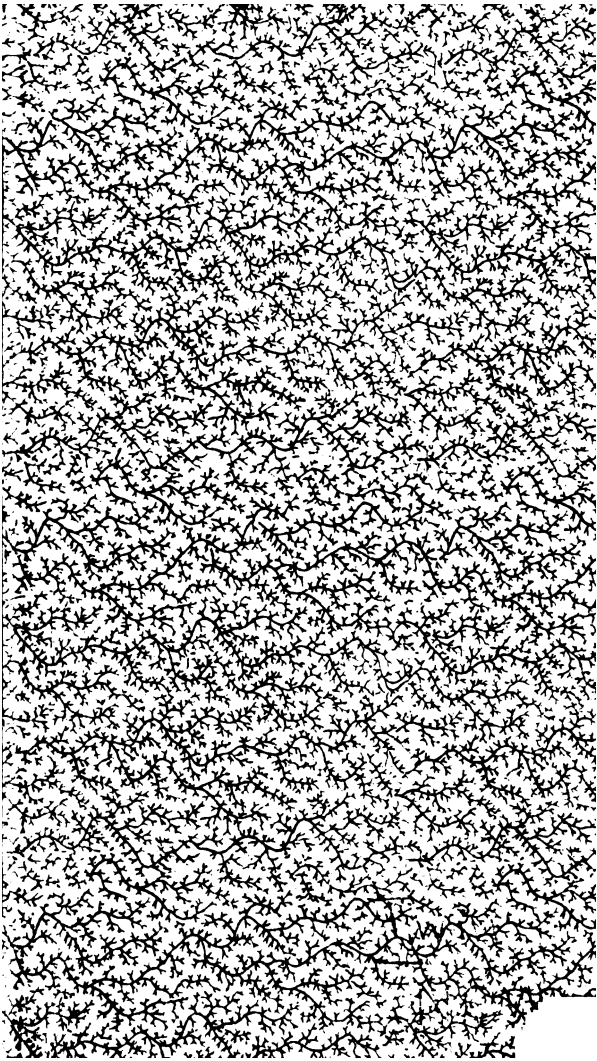

THE

TWIN SISTERS;

OR,

Two Girls of Nineteen:

BEING THE INTERESTING ADVENTURES OF SOPHIA AND CHARLOTTE MELFORD.

AN AFFECTING NARRATIVE.

WRITTEN BY

CHARLOTTE, ONE OF THE SISTERS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, THE

ORPHAN OF THE CASTLE;

A GOTHIC TALE,

OR, THE

SURPRISING HISTORY AND VICISSITUDES OF

ALLAN FITZ-ROBERT,

The Orphan Heir of the Castle of Lindisfarne.

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THE

TWIN SISTERS;

OR,

TWO GIRLS OF NINETEEN.

In relating the past events of my life I am not actuated by vanity, or a wish to make an ostentatious display of that prudence and fortitude which was my support and guide through the perils I have had to encounter in my early youth. No, my motives are far different; I wish to warn the inexperienced of my own sex, against the delusive arts practised by the other, to the loss of their virtue and domestic peace.

My grandfather held a considerable place at court; but possessing a spirit too lofty for his narrow fortune, and meeting with what he conceived to be a gross affront, he retired in disgust to East Bourne, to live on the interest of his fortune, which amounted to about two hundred and fifty pounds a year. He was a widower, with a son and daughter growing towards maturity.

My aunt, the gentle Emma, was unfortunate in love; her native elegance of manners attracted the attention of Sir Harvey Pelham, who was on a visit to Mr. Warrington, the lord of the manor; and his addresses proceeded so far, that a day was fixed for the nuptials. The only stipulation the baronet

was, that the projected wedding should be kept a secret till the morn of its celebration, to avoid, as he said, any remonstrances on the part of his friends against what they might consider so unequal an alliance. The baronet then set off for London for the avowed purpose of drawing up the marriage settlement, and preparing his house and servants for the reception of their mistress.

The time fixed for his return arrived, and no Sir Harvey came! my grandfather was enraged; but Emma would not believe her lover faithless, and urged her belief that some fatal accident had intervened; but grief and anxiety caused her a serious indisposition. Her father went to London to demand an explanation of Sir Harvey, when he found, to his surprise, the baronet was married to a rich widow lady, only two days previous to his inquiry, and gone for Ireland with his bride. This was a severe shock to Emma; she loved too sincerely to banish the remembrance of the traitor from her heart, though he had sacrificed his affections at the shrine of sordid avarice; she recovered her health, but ever after retained a visible depression of spirits.

This disappointment was followed by the death of her father; her brother, now in his twentieth year, succeeded to his small patrimony: having imbibed a serious dislike to commerce, he determined to remain in his present seclusion, and not endeavour to increase his capital by embarking in any kind of trade. Emma had only one hundred pounds, as a bequest from her parent, which she placed out at interest, and continued to reside with her brother as his house-keeper. Sir Harvey Pelham visited no more at East Bourne; he sent several letters to my aunt,

but she prudently returned them unopened; she received several respectable offers of marriage, but would not bestow her hand unaccompanied with her heart. She continued to reside with her brother in mutual harmony: he passed his fortieth year unmarried, and she considered herself as established with him the rest of her days; but nothing is so fluctuating as the tide of human affairs.

My father, Mr. Melford, was left executor to a very small fortune of a genteel young woman the daughter of a gentleman whose love of the chace had led him into expenses to which his fortune was inadequate. The beauty and misfortunes of the fair Catherine touched the heart of her executor, and, for the first time, made him sensible of the power of feminine charms. There was a vast disparity of years; but he was a handsome looking man; and after a short courtship he was accepted by Miss Colebrook, who piqued herself not a little on having made a conquest of a batchelor in his forty-second year: my aunt was invited to remain in his house, but she declined it, and accepted the situation of English teacher to a boarding-school at Brighton.

In a few months my father discovered that the fair Catherine was not exactly the woman he ought to have chosen: she loved company—he retirement: she was a stranger to domestic economy, and the management of a family; and while her husband was contriving how to save a little out of their limited income, she was purchasing a number of foolish articles for no other reason than to pass the time away: in such an improper manner are too many young women brought up. She was virtuous, good tempered, and affectionate; my father, therefore, be-

haved with patience and complaisance towards his wife, and was the best of husbands. My aunt was written to, and earnestly solicited to resume her place of manager to my parents' household; she consented, and they soon found the good effects of her care and neatness; her sister-in-law was delighted with this excellent woman, and began very soon to wish for no other society than what her house afforded.

My twin sister and myself were born (within an hour of each other) in the second year of our parents' marriage; and christened by the names of Charlotte and Sophia, and were the only offspring that blessed their union. We were fondly beloved by them and my dear aunt; my mother did honour to the maternal character; she took on herself the care of nursing us, and Emma continued to manage the family; my father strove to amuse the evenings with reading and music: as we grew up, he became our preceptor; and to my aunt we were indebted for our knowledge in needle-work, and other feminine accomplishments. This mode of living was fatally interrupted: my mother was fond of riding on horse-back, and frequently took that exercise; the animal she rode was very gentle; but one luckless day, being startled by the drums of a recruiting party marching through the village, he set off with a frightful velocity; my mother could not keep her seat, and her foot getting entangled in the stirrup, she was dragged as far as the turnpike gate. Description would be too painful—suffice it to say, we were deprived of that dear parent in the twelfth year of our age.

My father, on the loss of his dear Catherine, be-

came an altered man, and entered into scenes of dissipation, under the pretext of wishing to chase away painful reflections; in vain his sister remonstrated; he would act as he pleased, and began, at fifty-six, to commit follies scarcely pardonable in a youth of eighteen. East Bourne became too limited a sphere, and he went to pass a few months in the gay metropolis. He was absent more than half a year, when he returned wholly unexpected: we were shocked at the alteration so visible in his person—all resentment vanished, when we found he was seriously ill, and he received from us the most serious care and attendance.

We endeavoured to make his home so comfortable that he should not have a wish to leave it; yet, success did not crown our wishes; he was no sooner in a state of convalescence than he returned to London and his degrading pursuits; alas! a fresh cold brought on him a complication of disorders; he was unable to return home, and my aunt left us to attend him. We were anxious to be near our suffering parent, but she would not permit us. Our domestic was a careful precise woman, who had lived in the family many years, and we were put immediately under her protection till my aunt's return.

She had been absent about a fortnight, when a letter from that dear relation brought an account of my father's decease. I clapsed my arms round my sister's neck, and we wept in mutual agony, though we then knew not the extent of our misfortunes. Another fortnight elapsed before my aunt's arrival, when with a tenderness all her own, (for she was a stranger to feigned affection,) she disclosed to us that our fortunes were gone in the gulf of dissipa-

tion; for my father had scarcely left sufficient to clear his debts, and defray the expenses of his funeral: and the knowledge of this had rendered his death-bed a scene of misery and vain repentance. It was now necessary to quit the house we were in, for a smaller one suiting our present circumstances; it was also requisite that some plan should be fixed upon for our support. My aunt thus addressed us —"I have, my dear girls, allowed you as yet to give way to the natural emotions of your grief; but it is now time to exert the talents you are blessed with, and strive to procure a genteel maintenance. This will seem hard at first, but industrious perseverance may do much, and there are many comforts resulting from a life of honest independence."

She had arranged a plan for that purpose—there was a small but neat house at some distance from our present habitation; we hired it, and removed thither what furniture we wanted, converted the rest into money, and opened a genteel day school, of which my aunt was the ostensible proprietor, though the produce was equally shared among us. Content was the inmate of my bosom, nor had I at that time a wish beyond our little dwelling; it was not so with my sister; she continually sighed for the ease and affluence we had lost; nor did she in the least profit by my aunt's lessons of fortitude and resignation. The fatigue of the school fell, after a short time, wholly on myself; Sophia did not like the task of tuition, and our worthy aunt, for the last six months of her life, was not able to quit her chamber, through the united pressure of age and infirmities; she bore her sufferings with patience, but for us she grieved,

as by her death we should be left without protection at a most dangerous time of life.

This excellent woman was no sooner laid in the silent grave than we began to feel the extent of her loss; our school decreased; few people supposed two girls able to conduct a concern, though, in fact, (as I have previously stated,) my aunt did not, for many months before the close of her existence, attend in the least to her pupils; but prejudice is not easily overcome.

My sister was strenuous in her wishes for us to repair to London, and endeavour to procure places for each of us as governess in a respectable family;—thus she argued, "We shall procure friends, and see something of the gayeties of life; while here we are little better than buried alive: the money my aunt left us is near two hundred pounds: this will enable us to cut a figure in our dress, and we may, (here she laughed,) perhaps better our fortune by marriage; it is not impossible."—"At least," I replied, "'tis improbable, my dear sister: dismiss from your brain such romantic flights."

Our conversation was interrupted by a letter, conveyed through the medium of the general post: it was a polite and most friendly letter from a Mrs. Mowbray, a lady who had been a temporary resident at East Bourne, during the autumn, for the benefit of her health: she had taken so much notice of us, that I believe the conversation in which she engaged us first instilled into the mind of Sophia an ardent wish to visit the metropolis: she represented herself as a widow lady of considerable property; and her appearance was such as to confirm the idea, and demand respect.

The letter received from Mrs. Mowbray informed us, that she had made a point of inquiring among her acquaintance for situations for her charming young friends; she was hurt to see us vegetate in obscurity. In one instance she had been successful.—Lady Aspley had two children who were now at an age proper to commence the first rudiments of learning: Mrs. Mowbray had secured the place for one of us; the decision was to be postponed till we came to town, to which she entreated us to hasten with all possible despatch, as there was not the least doubt but the united influence of herself and Lady Aspley among their numerous intimates would soon procure an eligible employment for the remaining sister. Till we were settled, she bade us, in terms of cordial friendship, consider her house as our home. The letter contained a ten pound note to defray our expenses to London.

Sophia was quite elated, and profuse in her admiration of the generous Mrs. Mowbray; I was not so sanguine in my expectations; I loved the place of my nativity; we were among people who knew and respected us, and I had no doubt but, with perseverance and good conduct, that we should be able to live genteelly; for we had already regained some of our pupils. In vain I represented this to Sophia; she would hear of nothing but preparing for our journey; and won me over by her arguments to concur in her opinion. I would not hear of parting with our house and furniture, till we were satisfied that we could find situations agreeable in the metropolis: the idea of having no home was very desolate: our former servant Dorothy was married, and settled near us; we engaged her to take care of our

dwelling, She heard of our intended journey with reluctance: she had never been in London: but to use her own words, she heard it was a sink of iniquity, where there was no resting-place for virtue.

According to Mrs. Mowbray's instructions, we travelled in a post-chaise, (she did not approve of the stage, but the reason was not explained,) and as we were unused to it, for fear fatigue should be prejudicial, we were to sleep one night on the road. As we are now entering into the more eventful scenes of our lives, it may not be amiss to give a short sketch of our persons (such as they then were.) We were so much twin sisters, that we knew not which was the eldest, for the woman who attended my mother did not attend to that circumstance in time: we were now entering our nineteenth year, tall and well shaped; I was inclined to the brunette, my dark eyes were bright and sparkling; but Sophia was fair as the unsullied lilly, her eyes of cerulean blue, possessed of softness and sensibility of expression, that touched to the soul, when she spoke of an interesting subject. I was in general cheerful, seldom elated or much depressed; my sister was the gayest of the gay, when fortune appeared with smiling aspect, but she shrank from the touch of sorrow and adversity with feelings as delicate as a sensitive plant.

When we arrived at the inn where we were to sleep, we desired to be shown into the room destined for our repose, and said we should take a light supper there; we followed the chambermaid to an apartment containing two beds, who informed us that the house was so crowded, we could have no other accommodation; two nice ladies, who often travelled that road, and were now at supper in a

a room below, were to occupy the other bed. As there was no alternative, complaint was useless, though we were vexed at this unexpected circumstance. We took some sandwiches with wine and water before we retired to rest. Sleep soon sealed our eyelids, but I was presently awaked by the entrance of some persons into the chamber; I peeped through the curtains, and beheld two women, whose large bonnets, pelisses, and shawls, seemed equally to defend them from the weather and observation.

They soon dismissed the chambermaid; and one of them, taking up the candle, approached our bed; I feigned sleep, for I wished to discover the motives that led to this liberty. The stranger waved the light over our eyes, and then withdrew from the bed, saying to the other, "They are two nice girls, by Jove, and in a sound sleep; I should like"—"Like to be a fool, Jack," says the other; your tricks will be the ruin of us at last. Stay till we get safe to London, and dispose of our goods: there are girls enough there of all sorts; these are most likely some of your modest ones, and if you meddle with them, there will be a fine confusion, and our detection be the consequence."

"As for modesty," replied he, with an ironical air, "I am not much inclined to believe it, or they would not travel unprotected; they are too smart for rustics going to London to seek a service; besides I saw them alight from a post-chaise; take my word for it, Tom, they are two pretty adventurers, who have been to the sea side; they would like our company, and money would bind them to secresy."

An argument followed, improper for me to repeat, and I trembled with apprehension. They were prac-

tised smugglers, disguised as women, and the inebriation of one had overcome his caution: at length he yielded to the entreaties of his confederate, to lay down to take some rest; they left a light burning, and only took off their large bonnets and shawls. Sleep was banished from me. Sophia reposed unconscious of harm, nor did I dare awake her; some time elapsed, and I began to hope we should escape molestation; alas! the elder of the smugglers no sooner announced, by his snoring, that he slept, than the other left his bed and approached ours; I shrieked! Sophia awakened, and joined in my cries, at intervals asking the cause of my terror.

The other man leaped from the bed, and hastily reproaching his companion for the imprudence of which he had been guilty, advanced with a pistol, and presented it to my breast; my sister went into violent hysterics. Footsteps were heard in the gallery. "Mind me," said the man, "I am resolute; repeat one word to endanger our safety, or contradict any assertion I shall make as to the cause of the alarm, and that moment is your last." He opened the door, and some women belonging to the inn entered: his companion was busily assisting me, in restoring the insensible Sophia; the other took on himself to explain.—He said, "one of the ladies had awaked from her sleep with a loud shriek, and fell into strong fits, probably owing to some frightful dream." They withdrew, satisfied by this account.

Unwilling to be again in the power of those lawless wretches, I rang for the chambermaid, and presenting her with half a crown, entreated her to make some tea; I said my sister was subject to these fits, and nothing was so serviceable to her as that refresh-

ing beverage, when she began to recover. She withdrew, and said the tea should be ready in a few minutes. The smugglers thanked me; and with an oath said that I had nothing more to fear from them.

The eldest of them advised us, as we appeared to be virtuous young women, to be more discreet for the future, and never sleep in a two-bedded room on the road, with people to whom we were strangers, lest we might not escape so well then as we had now. Sophia was so far recovered as to ask me the meaning of what she heard; I whispered her to be silent, till a more convenient time; she understood me, and complied, but her audible sobs distressed me. The entrance of the maid with tea was a great relief: for I considered her presence as a security against outrage. We had scarcely concluded this refreshment, when the waiter came to awaken the pretended ladies (who were, or counterfeited to be, in a deep sleep) and inform them the stage was preparing to set off to London; their departure gave me pleasure, and when the chambermaid retired, I recounted to Sophia the meaning of my alarm, and we joined in returning thanks to heaven for our safety. I secured the chamber door and then gave way to repose.

It was near eleven in the forenoon, before we resumed our journey; we were so fortunate as to arrive in London without any further alarm, and put up at an inn near Charing Cross: I wrote to inform Mrs. Mowbray of our arrival, and sent a porter with a note to Howland-street. In less than two hours I was informed that a gentlewoman wanted to see the Miss Melfords; she was past the middle age; and of a very prepossessing appearance; she was housekeeper to Mrs. Mowbray, and had lived many years

in the family, and was sent to conduct us to her mistress; a coach was waiting, and we went with anxious hearts to our new abode; we were received by Mrs. Mowbray in an elegant drawing-room with many kind expressions of affection and friendship, and were introduced the next day to Lady Aspley, a fine looking woman, but rather corpulent, and apparently more than thirty years of age; her husband, Sir Richard Aspley, was abroad, on an embassy of importance, and the house in Cavendish-square, from motives of economy, was let, during his absence, to a nobleman; the lady and her children residing at an elegant cottage *orne* that they possessed in a delightful spot, between Old Brompton and Kensington.

Lady Aspley explained this to us, and chatted for some time with the most affable condescension; she then addressed Mrs. Mowbray on the subject that had brought us to Howland-street. "You have, my dear friend, assigned me a difficult task, to choose one of these young ladies as a tutoress to my children, they are both so unexceptionable, that I am quite at a loss to make a decision." "Allow me then, madam," replied Mrs. Mowbray, "to recommend to your ladyship Miss Sophia Melford; she possesses more vivacity than her amiable sister, and as she will frequently be *tete-a-tete* with you during Sir Richard's absence, her artless *gaite de cœur* will enliven your temporary solitude."

"Be it so," said Lady Aspley, and immediately engaged my sister at a very handsome salary; she was to call for her the next day in her chariot. We were grateful for our good fortune, but this was our first separation, and we found it painful; we parted in tears that could not be repressed, though we were

to meet in the course of a few days. Mrs. Mowbray kindly soothed my sorrow, I entreated her not to delay procuring me a situation, as I could not bear the thoughts of intruding so much on her generosity; she assured me she took so much pleasure in my company, that she should not be in a hurry to part from me, nor would she at any rate suffer me to leave her till something of the most eligible kind should offer.

Mrs. Mowbray saw a good deal of the best of company, as she termed them, but their manners were not pleasing to me; many of the expressions among them bordered on the obscene, and double entendres were common among them. I took courage, and hinted this to Mrs. Mowbray, she laughed, and said I was a pretty innocent rustic; that I should soon know more of a town life, and think nothing of these little freedoms, I was amazed at this answer, and began to form suspicions not much to the credit of my patroness, which were heightened by the following circumstances crowding on my reflection; I was allowed to retire, as I was not used to late hours, every night at eleven, but Mrs. Mowbray's company did not seem to retire for several hours after that period, but gave way to the most riotous mirth; the next house I understood was an hotel, the noise from which, the walls being slight, was a great annoyance to me, and between the two I seldom got any sleep. Was it possible a real lady would live next to a place of such an infamous description; as I was sure that was by the objects I saw from the window go in and out, though a mere novice in such things. I wished to see my sister, and hear what account she gave of Lady Aspley, as I could then judge whether or not my

ideas had deceived me. When we met at breakfast I expressed my surprise to Mrs. Mowbray, that we had not seen my sister, or Lady Aspley, and near a week had elapsed, therefore entreated permission to go to Brompton; she replied, "I did not like to tell you so, my dear Charlotte, till I could no longer defer it, one of the children was taken suddenly ill, and they yesterday set off for Margate, as sea-bathing is recommended for the little Julia; so you cannot see your sister."

I felt a scarlet suffusion flush on my cheeks; I could not speak, and retreating to the room where I slept, I began to pack up my clothes, resolving not to stay an hour longer in that house. While I was thus employed, Mrs. Mowbray entered, and asked what I was doing. I answered, with some coolness, I would no longer be a burden to her, I did not like to eat the bread of idleness, and I would remove to some lodging till I could hear of a situation.

I received a torrent of abuse; my attempts to leave the house were resisted—she called two of the maids to her assistance, and I was locked in my chamber—I wept for myself, and thought of Sophia with agony; it was too plain that we were both betrayed by this vile woman and her confederates.

It was near ten at night before any one came near me, when one of the women entered with some coffee; I refused to take it, but at length yielded to her entreaties. I thought she regarded me with an eye of pity. I questioned her on the subject most important to me, and she acknowledged Mrs. Mowbray to be a procuress, who was employed by (to use her own words,) very great gentlemen to ensnare young girls; the fate, she added, of many of

ims was widely different; some were taken
keeping, and some were soon reduced to
t order of prostitutes. She assured me she
whither my sister was conveyed; but the
Aspley must be a fictitious one to impose

d a miserable night; I tried to escape, but
impossible. The same woman attended
breakfast. I told her if she would contrive
go from this wretched house in safety I
e her twenty pounds; she hesitated, and I
my request with every argument I could
She wept, and said she had no wish to be
to the ruin of an innocent girl; but she,
as it was not necessary to repeat, was very
he power of Mrs. Mowbray; but she would
of it, and let me know when she came next
m if there was any means of serving me
rawing herself into a snare. She returned
oner than I expected, and in apparent
Lauk, Miss Charlotte," said she, "don't
Lord Morden;"—"Yes; I have been in
any several times since I came here."—
is for him you are intended; I heard him
istress talking it over; it seems he saw you
ourne several times, though you did not
n: he employed Mrs. Mowbray to lure you
and as your sister was equally handsome,
trap for her too. Oh! she is an artful wo-
few fish escape her net; however give me
y you promised, and I'll get you from
all hazards; be ready to go at twelve to-

ll gratitude, and gave her the money, with

many thanks for her kindness. Susan was no sooner gone than Mrs. Mowbray entered a smiling aspect and invited me to come down to dinner, entreating me to banish all animosity, and accept her proffered reconciliation and friendship. I haughtily answered that I was aware on what terms her friendship must be purchased, and disdained it. She flattered, soothed, and threatened, by turns; but I was proof against her artifice, and defied her power.

She then assured me she would humble my proud spirit, and since I would not accept her friendship, which could raise me to a splendour many married ladies might regard with envy, she should keep no further terms with me, or grant the least indulgence; and she left the room, muttering indignant threats. I flung myself on the bed, and gave way to unchecked grief; all my hopes rested on Susan, but a painful thought struck on my brain—might she not deceive me! and I regretted having parted with my money till I was more assured of its being the means of my liberation.

Mrs. Mowbray brought my meals; we both preserved a sullen silence. Susan did not appear, and my heart sunk within me. Soon after the house clock had struck twelve, I heard the bolts that were outside the chamber door softly undraw; hope revived—no one entered—all was silent—I went to the top of the stairs, there appeared no interruption, and I gently descended, supposing that I might gain the street, and that Susan, having freed me from my chamber, thought further assistance needless.

I was on the landing of the first floor when I heard footsteps ascending; and I hastily retreated into a back drawing-room. Merciful heaven! what

could exceed my astonishment when I perceived an opposite door stand wide open, and afford a communication with the bagnio; (I had formerly thought this a small closet:) no doubt but Mrs. Mowbray was its proprietor, and kept the house we lived in for her more private purpose. While I was deliberating how to act, the door through which I entered was fastened on me, and I swooned with terror. When I revived, I found myself supported by Lord Morden, who was a bold fashionable young man. "Do not fly me, my dear," said he, "I am not going to harm you: I wish to be indebted to your affection, not force; smile on me, and I will lay my life at your feet—speak my angel!—why this silence?"—"My Lord," I replied, "were I free from this hateful place, and mistress of my own actions, I might then set a true value on your generosity; but as I am situated"—He interrupted me.—"Stop," said he, "I will free you from her power, and I have no doubt to be able to remove from your mind any prejudice you may have taken against a life of honour; depend on it that marriage is a system of priestcraft, absurd to a rational mind."

He left me before I could reply; and his return was almost instantaneous; and as he came back he was adjusting the sliders of his purse, which left no doubt that he had been settling pecuniary affairs with the rapacious Mrs. Mowbray. "Come, my dear Charlotte," said Lord Morden, "I have a hackney-coach in waiting, (for I did not order my chariot to-night,) that will convey us to the place of which you shall reign sole mistress, and possess my undivided heart." He took my hand and led me down the stairs; I did not resist, for these were my

passing thoughts:—It is better to have to contend with Lord Morden than this vile woman and her unprincipled associates; from them I could not escape; any place is preferable to the one I am in, and I was resolved to stake my safety in that change. That Susan had betrayed me was evident. I suffered by my credulity, and resolved to be more cautious in future.

The coach went on with rapidity, and I found in a short time that we had left town, and were proceeding along a road that appeared very dreary. I became seriously alarmed, though, to speak with justice of his lordship, he did not offer to take the least unbecoming liberty. He felt my hand tremble, and bade me dismiss my fears, that we were only going a little way beyond Bayswater, and were near our journey's end. We stopped at a neat white house, the coachman was ordered to knock, but the summons was several times repeated with violence before the door was opened; nor was that done till a female demanded, in a harsh discordant voice, who was there at such an hour? and discovered Lord Morden to be the intruder.

The woman, whom he addressed by the name of Maltsby, was a coarse masculine creature, and her dress of that doubtful kind that I could not guess whether she was mistress or servant till this slight mystery was elucidated by his lordship's inquiring for the former, and asking if she slept at home; being answered in the affirmative, he desired Maltsby to show me into the parlour while he went up stairs. I soon heard a violent altercation between his lordship and a female, in a very shrill voice; her language was gross; and though I could not hear all

that passed, it was enough to explain that Matilda had been seduced from virtue by Lord Morden, and lately discarded for her infidelity, with a small settlement; he now offered her a sum, immense in my estimation, to let me remain with her a few days, and to treat me with every respect and attention, but not to allow me to leave the house under any pretext, unless in his company.

Matilda at length acquiesced, and his lordship returning, said he had been so fortunate as to secure me the protection of a lady till I should allow him the happiness of providing me an establishment of my own. "My Lord," I replied, "without the meanness of listening I overheard sufficient to be aware of your boasted protection; when you released me from Mrs. Mowbray's you promised I should be mistress of my own fate, and at liberty to make my own decision; suffer me to tell you, that your actions agree not with your words." He seemed confused; but recovering from it, said, "to-morrow every thing shall be arranged to your wishes; at such an hour I had no other place where I could convey you; blame me not for telling the people not to allow you to depart without me; think not that I can bear to lose my heart's best treasure so lightly: no! I trust that mutual affection will bind us through existence to each other."

I did not choose to make any remark to this fine harangue, and I saw him depart with as much pleasure as the awkward predicament I was placed in would allow me to feel. Maltsby conducted me up stairs to a small room, neatly furnished, in the attic story: she told me the bed was well aired; and giving me a light, left me to seek a repose that fatigue

and sorrow had rendered necessary to recruit my exhausted frame. I slept till a late hour; and was awakened by the unlocking of my chamber door by Maltsby, who informed me that Matilda Wilson waited breakfast for me.

I was soon ready, and followed the woman to a room on the first floor; the furniture and the clothes strewed about were elegant, but pourtrayed sluttish disorder and mismanagement. At the breakfast table sat a young woman in a negligent undress; her cheeks were highly rouged, and she had an air of boldness that disgusted me. I burst into tears, and sinking on one of the seats, besought her to pity me, and not aid in the ruin of an innocent girl by detaining me till Lord Morden came. "Curses on him!" exclaimed Matilda with violence; "he was my ruin! he lured me from my home, my innocence was despoiled, and I am now sunk into the paths of depravity. Monster, thus to insult me, to bring another under my roof; I only consented to receive you that I might baffle his attempts; it will be a slight retaliation for the heart-aches he has given me; all the love I once had for him is now turned to the deadliest hate."

She made me take some tea; I hurried my breakfast, and then entreated permission to leave the house, which was granted; and I lost not a moment in bidding adieu to Miss Matilda and her maid. I ran, or rather flew, along the road. I was not only apprehensive of meeting Lord Morden, but also of pursuit from the house I had quitted; for the glances its mistress had bestowed on me gave rise to ideas that my liberation proceeded more from jealousy and fancied insult than the goodness of her heart: I was

afraid interest would triumph over her passions, and lead her to repent the part she had acted. I reached Hyde Park Corner in safety; a hackney-coach passed me; I called to the man, and engaged him to take me to Charing Cross, which was the first place that entered my mind, for I was indifferent where I went, so that I were distant from the objects of my terror.

As the coach proceeded I had time to arrange my scattered thoughts, and consider what means I had best pursue. I was a destitute being, and knew not where to seek a shelter for my head; my clothes were left at Mrs. Mowbray's; Susan had deprived me of twenty pounds, and I had no more left than five guineas, and then wandered through several streets, looking for furnished lodgings. In a neat court, leading down to the Strand, I saw a small chandler's shop with a bill in the window—"A room to let for a single woman." I ventured in, and said I was come from the country to spend a few days on some business; and as I had no friends in town on whom I should like to intrude, I wished to engage an apartment in a creditable house. She asked me for a reference as to character; I pulled out my purse, and giving her a guinea, said I should deposit that as a security for my rent. She first looked at me, then at my money, and at last complied, but in a most ungracious manner; for as she showed me up to my new abode, (a mean back room on the second floor,) she kept muttering about the unpleasantness of taking in nobody knows who.

I was cold and hungry; I requested a fire, and named what I would wish to eat.—"I am not used to wait on my lodgers," said the woman; "I keeps no sarvant, and I've never no gentlefolks lodgers

here, we can all wait on ourselves;" and she went down stairs uttering some free remarks on what she termed half-bred gentry.

I was vexed; but my reflections on this provoking behaviour were interrupted by the entrance of a woman, who apparently lodged in the next room; her meagre squalid figure was the exact emblem of poverty. Hogarth could not have selected a better model, but her accents were civil, and she said she was willing to attend on me for a very small remuneration. I therefore employed her to procure the few articles I wanted. The next morning I took a coach and went to Mr. Chapman's, a wholesale haberdasher in the city, in whose hands my aunt's money had been placed, at accumulating interest. Previous to her death she had made it over to me and my sister, and the deed had been transmitted, with all due formalities, to Mr. Chapman, by an attorney of East Bourne. I went thither to receive my share of the legacy, and ask advice of that gentleman how I had best proceed to seek redress from Mrs. Mowbray, and procure a respectable situation.

I found Mr. Chapman at home, and was introduced to him in a small counting-house by one of his clerks. He surveyed me with his small, but keen gray eyes, and inquired my business, which was soon explained, and the manner in which we had been betrayed to town. He seemed to pity me; said he was very sorry he had not a home to offer me, as no female but the menial servants resided in his house since he had been a widower; he advised me by no means to enter into a litigation with Mrs. Mowbray, as my character might suffer by a misjudging world, were it known that I had been an inmate of her infamous

house; he desired me to call in the course of a week, and he would see what could be done. I took a ten pound note, and left the rest in his hands till that period; for I was afraid to venture such a sum at my lodgings. As I meant to take Mr. Chapman's advice, and put up quietly with the loss of my clothes, I purchased a few articles of wearing apparel which I took home with me in a coach, resolving to confine myself to my humble lodging till I went again into the city, lest I should be seen (were I to walk out) by any of the persons I had reason to dread.

I retired in the evening to bed at a very early hour, for want of books or work to amuse my mind. I was awakened by a violent knocking at my chamber-door; I leaped from my bed distracted with terror and apprehension, and demanded the cause of my being disturbed.—"Let us in," said a rough voice, or we shall burst the door open." I flung up the sash of my window, and screamed for help. I knew not what I had to fear, but was certain that this violence predicted me personal harm.

The door was burst from its hinges, and my landlady entered, accompanied by two men, whose fierce glances awed me into silence. The woman of the house dragged me forward:—"Here," said she, "is madam: come, put on your clothes and pelisse, and go with these gentlemen; you have led 'em a fine dance: I warrant you are used to these tricks.—Coud'nt wait on yourself, indeed—such airs! I thought you were no better than you should be."—"I know not what you mean," I exclaimed, "by such treatment; neither shall I go with these men; I never saw them before in my life: unhand me or you shall suffer for this insult." I was answered by

a loud laugh.—" O, you sly one!" exclaimed that stood next me, " don't you know we are officers? surely you must expectus, after wl have done."

I assured them I was innocent of any crin that it was a mistake; but they persisted in me away, and I was dragged down the stair out the least regard paid to my tears and ent nor would they even inform me of what I was a They conveyed me to a wretched looking ho longing to one of the men, and this it seeme to consider as a favour; and if I were ci treated them with some liquor, I might remai instead of being taken to a place of confinem the hour that the magistrates sat on the fo morning, when my accuser would appear charge preferred against me; I gave the mor desired; one of them went out for some dri I remained with his wife, while his companic fully guarded the door.

The woman was loquacious, and I lear her, that my dress and appearance exactly ponded with that of a young woman who h mitted forgery, and was advertised for in th papers, during several of the preceding weeks have been very dexterous," said the wom have so long eluded pursuit; but I am afrai go hard with you, according to what I have the case." I now strenuously assured them mistake they had committed; but I might have addressed the northern winds. I was to submit, and yet I must acknowledge my m relieved; I had no doubt of obtaining my li the morning: but till this explanation ha

place, I conceived that I owed this outrage to some deep-laid design of Lord Morden, or his vile assistant Mrs. Mowbray.

My feelings were so excruciating when conducted to the office, that I was ready to sink to the earth. Merciful Providence! what must be the terrors of the guilty! when I, though innocent, had such mental sufferings! The gentleman on whom the forgery had been practised, was called for; on seeing me he started back, and announced my innocence. I was quite a different person to the one he expected to see. The officers, in their own justification produced the advertisement; my bonnet, pelisse, my dark eyes, hair, and even the height, corresponded with the description; but it appeared in the *tout ensemble* I was widely different.

The magistrates said I might bring an action for the inconvenience and false imprisonment I had suffered, which it appeared was owing to the woman, who had offered to go on my errands, imbibing an idea that I was the person advertised, and giving information to the office. The short time I was in the house I had been very kind to her, for she had told me a tale of wretchedness. I declined the mode of redress pointed out, and left the office, accompanied by Mr. Newton, the person on whom the forgery had been committed; he solicited the honour of attending me to my lodgings, whither I meant to repair only to remove the few clothes I possessed to a place where I could repose more confidence in its possessors. I declined, and he persisted, till the altercation brought us to the door. I felt a timidity at entering alone; and suffered him to ascend; the woman seemed surprised at my return, but did not

put any questions to me on the subject. I took my bundle, and left the house, telling the person that belonged to it, I hoped she would think the guinea I had left sufficient for the trouble I had given her.

We walked to the end of the court. Mr. Newton called a coach; I stepped into it, and he followed; for anguish of mind had made me almost unconscious of what I was doing; but I soon recollected the impropriety of my situation, and thanked Mr. Newton for the attention he had shown me, and entreated him to excuse me if I declined his company.

His answer shocked me. He mistook me for one of those hapless beings, whose company money could purchase, and made me proposals accordingly. I expressed my disdain and astonishment at this insult; he pleaded the situation he had found me in at my lodgings, so ill according with my appearance, and my apparent want of a home; and begged me to account, if I was a virtuous girl, for the want of friends, under which I seemed to labour. To explain the untoward circumstances that had led me into this unpleasant situation, I thought unnecessary, nor had a stranger a right to inquire. I told him the latter in plain terms, and renewed my request, that he would stop the coach, as I wished to alight. He refused, and began to take the most disgusting liberties! he attempted to pull up the blinds, but my screams made him desist; and in a few moments the coach was stopped by the interference of some persons, whom my cries had alarmed; several of them came to the door of the vehicle, and inquired the cause of the disturbance.

I entreated them to rescue me; for Mr. Newton held me in his arms. He dared them to touch me

and said I was his daughter, and had eloped from him; that he had recovered me, but I resisted his efforts to convey me home to a sorrowing affectionate mother. The people began to disperse, with execrations on my base conduct, and I regarded myself as lost; for Mr. Newton was vociferously calling on the coachman to drive on towards St. Paul's Church-yard, when, thanks to kind Providence, my guardian angel, in the form of a good looking elderly man, interposed and saved me: or to speak without allegory, I must inform my readers that a person, to whom Mr. Newton was known, laid his hand on the coach door, saying, "Is it possible to see you acting thus! you, the father of a young family, and the husband of an amiable lovely woman, who reposed all her confidence in you, and made you the unlimited possessor of a fortune, far beyond what you had ever the smallest right to expect: as her uncle and former guardian, I take upon me to asssert her cause, and I tell you I regard you as a villain."

Mr. Newton seemed roused at these words from the stupor of amaze into which the appearance of the old gentleman had thrown him, and he made some indignant remarks on the conduct of his detector. He had relinquished his hold, and taking advantage of this favourable opportunity, I opened the door next me, and leaped from the coach with my bundle. I heard the voice of Mr. Newton, calling on me to stop, and this only served to redouble my speed. I hastened along through the first turnings that presented themselves to view, till weariness obliged me to stop.

Seeing a small parlour window, in which was placed cakes and toys for sale, in a very humble man-

ner, I entered, and saw a decent looking woman in mourning, who was far advanced in life, but had a pleasing aspect, I asked her if she would allow me to sit down, and take some refreshment in her apartment, for I was a stranger, and not accustomed to go into places where such things were sold; she said I was heartily welcome, and sent out her daughter, a nice little girl, for what I wanted. She eyed me and my bundle with earnestness, and asked if I had far to go. I made no answer; but my eyes filled with tears. "Perhaps you have left a situation, and are returning home?" I uttered a faint negative. "You seem afflicted, miss; can I assist you? I am sure, by your looks, you are a good innocent young creature, and are far too pretty and genteel to walk by yourself in such a place as London." Her humble abode, and plainness of manner, inspired my confidence, and I imparted the mournful tale of my persecutions. She wept with pity; for she was a widow and now in mourning for a lovely girl of seventeen, her eldest daughter, who had been seduced from her home a few months since, and who, from the united effects of remorse, and the perfidy of her lover, had broken her heart.

I agreed to board with this worthy widow, till I could hear of a situation, as her humble table would best suit my low finances. She went with me to old Brompton, but we could hear of no such names as Lady Aspley or Miss Melford, nor any persons answering their description, and I was thus disappointed of gaining the least clue to trace out my beloved sister. I went to Mr. Chapman's at the time he had fixed, still accompanied by Mrs. Brent, for I was afraid to venture out alone. That good man receiv-

ed me with pleasure; and rubbing his hands with seeming satisfaction, told me he had been so fortunate as to engage me as English teacher to a lady, who was mistress of a respectable boarding school at Kensington. "She is cousin to my late wife; I merely informed her that you were come from East Bourne, to receive a legacy that lay in my hands, and procure an establishment either in a seminary or private family; I made no mention of Sophia, or your town adventures, so be discreet, and I do not fear of your being a credit to my recommendation." He told me to be ready the next day at two and he would call for me at my lodgings, in a coach to escort me to Kensington. My tears were tears of gratitude; and my heart was eased of an oppressive burthen. I rewarded Mrs. Brent in a liberal manner for her kindness. She saw me depart with regret, and made me promise an early visit.

I found my situation very comfortable; my conduct pleased my employer, and gained me the love and respect of my pupils. I had been a Kensington nearly six months, when an event occurred to disturb my tranquillity. I was walking one evening with Miss Chapone, our French teacher, in a retired lane, when my companion exclaimed, "What a nice lady is coming towards us! but her dress is too elegant for walking; how much she resembles you in figure.

I looked up: it was Sophia! I eagerly flew to embrace her, but recognizing me, she fled with precipitation, followed by a boy in livery, who attended her. I made a slight apology to my companion, and desiring her to wait for me at a fruit-shop near home, pursued the fugitives. Sophia stopped at a small

gate, and rang the bell: I caught her by the hand just as the lock was drawn back by a sickly looking woman-servant—"My dear sister!" I exclaimed, "suffer me to speak to you for one half hour; I promise not to intrude on you again, if you desire it. Deny me not this request, my twin-sister! my still beloved Sophia."

She was affected, though she strove to conceal her emotion. "If you so much wish to see me, Charlotte, come to-morrow at this time: at present I have persons within whom it will not be agreeable to you to meet; I own I would rather decline the interview, our sentiments are not in unison." With these words she left me, and the gate was closed. I returned to Miss Chapone, and under the seal of secresy, gave her the history of myself and sister; for I knew not how else to account for what she had witnessed. Miss Chapone waited for me at the same place the next evening, for I could not, with any propriety, leave home unaccompanied.

Sophia's residence was a charming retreat in the midst of a spacious garden, effectually secured from view by a lofty wall, bounded with poplars. Sophia received me in an apartment, the furniture of which might with justice be styled magnificent, and her dress corresponded: this display of splendour was most likely with a view to dazzle my eyes, and lead me to sigh for similar luxury. By her desire, I related the incidents that had occurred to me since our departure. I did this most minutely. When I had concluded, she shocked me by saying, "you had better, Charlotte, have yielded to the addresses of Lord Morden; under his protection you would have escaped these perils, and not have been in the grovel-

ling situation of teacher; you must possess a poor spirit; perhaps with all your high-flown notions of virtue you will fall in love with some fellow without a shilling, who will be the ruin of you."

I gave her an indignant reply. She laughed at me, and to turn the discourse, began her own history, which was concisely thus:—Lady Aspley was an assumed name, the real appellation of this infamous woman was Browning, and the account she gave of having two children a fiction. The house that Sophia now resided in jointly belonging to Browning and Mowbray, as did the others in Howland-street. This at Brompton was occasionally used by themselves for purposes of force or seduction, and at intervals let to such of their employers as wanted a private retreat for their ladies.

Poor Sophia had been introduced to a gentleman named Greville, by Mrs. Browning, after previous care to inflame her passions, and subvert her morals, by arts disgraceful to the sex. Partly by persuasion and partly by force, Mr. Greville triumphed over her innocence, and reconciled her to the life of a kept mistress by his presents. He hired this villa for Sophia; and she had occasionally lodgings in town. I had the additional shock of hearing from her own lips, that she often visited in Howland-street, and had occasionally seen Lord Morden there, who never ceased to regret my inflexibility, and execrate Matilda for allowing me to leave Bayswater. Sophia was a contented victim, pleased with her guilty trappings; and previous to my departure, she again renewed her persuasions for me to embrace the same mode of life. I could no longer repress my feelings; I rose from my seat, saying, "Lost, dego-

nerate girl! no further intercourse must pass between us; nor will I ever acknowledge you as a sister till penitence takes place of guilt and folly in your hardened bosom. She made no endeavours to detain me; my presence was rather a restraint on her. But a deep sigh that she gave as I descended the stairs led me to hope she was not callous to remorse or feeling.

I unguardedly told my sister where I resided, and too soon had cause to repent my folly. She either had, from thoughtlessness or design, (I fear the latter,) mentioned it to the persons from whom I wished to conceal. I received a letter from Lord Morden, expressing the continuance and fervour of his love, and offering large settlements; he entreated a personal interview at my sister's; or if not there, at any place I should choose to appoint. I sent an immediate answer: it was firm, reproachful and decisive. I wrote the same day to Mr. Chapman; he applauded my conduct, but advised a removal; considering Kensington no longer a place of safety to me. I left the school with regret, and once more went to board with Mrs. Brent.

In a few weeks Mr. Chapman procured me a situation as companion to an elderly lady of the first respectability, residing in Berkeley-square. Mrs. Woodley soon imbibed a flattering partiality for me and was pleased to call me her adopted daughter. I was introduced to all her friends, and made one in every party; nothing could be more eligible and pleasing than the favours of my liberal patroness. I received a note from my sister, requesting to see me at her lodgings, near Oxford-street; I was to inquire for Miss Murray. I took the first opportunity of

complying with her request, for I sincerely hoped that penitence had prompted her to write.

I found her in a lodging where dirt, and confusion in its furniture, did not seem an object worthy to be attended to. I no longer beheld the elegant lady of pleasure; Sophia was altered in person, but highly rouged, and dressed in modish frippery, arranged in a manner the most indecent and disgusting. I started back; but my sister extended her hand; I sat down by her on the sofa and wept aloud. Mr. Greville, struck with the charms of a new face, had abandoned Sophia, and that without making her the least settlement. She had quarrelled with Mrs Mowbray and her colleague, and had taken these lodgings, which it was evident from the appearance of the other females belonging to the house, were appropriated to the use of those who earn their bread by prostitution. Sophia wished to receive her aunt's legacy, and had sent for me to know where it was vested, a circumstance she had not previously attended to. I gave her Mr. Chapman's direction, but declined going with her for obvious reasons. She confessed that her extravagance had soon dissipated the presents Mr. Greville had made her, and she was now forced to submit to casual admirers for support; yet the infatuated girl would not listen to my arguments, though I offered to supply her pecuniary wants till I could place her in a situation where a return of virtue and competence might bring her peace.

Intemperance and guilty pleasure enslaved her mind; and she said it would be time enough for her to repent, and lead such a life as I suggested, when the hand of time had rendered her old and ugly. I

still was continuing my persuasion when Lord Morden entered the room unannounced; for I presume it was not a place where ceremony was attended to: he was advancing towards Sophia, but surprise at seeing me checked him:—"Is it possible, my dear Charlotte, that we must meet? O, you little runaway, what anxiety you have made me suffer! now I will make myself amends. Go, Sophia, and order tea." I caught my sister's hand—"Leave me not, dear girl! leave me not! lest my curses should call down heaven's maledictions on your head: save me now, and I shall bless you with my latest breath."—Sophia flung her arms round my neck, telling me to dismiss my fears; for she was not so vile as Lord Morden thought her.

She addressed him in a language that showed jealousy prompted her expressions; and from their mutual revilings, I found that, on Greville's desertion, Lord Morden, disappointed in his views of me, had plunged her still further in the gulf of infamy, though he refused to take her under his protection in answer to her intreaties for that purpose. Lord Morden departed, vowing revenge; and Sophia, at my request, sent for a coach. Whilst I waited for it, Sophia blamed me for supposing she would aid in betraying me against my inclination. "If you had at one time accepted Lord Morden's brilliant offers, that would be a different case. But you must follow your own way; I shall take mine." I sighed; and wishing to turn the discourse, I asked her how she had discovered my residence. She said she had more than once seen me go into Mrs. Woodley's house; and having caused a person to make inquiries, she discovered that I was that lady's companion.

The coach conveyed me safe to Berkeley square. Mrs. Woodley welcomed me home; she thought my stay long, but fortunately, did not inquire where I had been visiting. I detested falsehood; but how could I have told the truth. It was soon my fate to inspire an honorable attachment; and the passion was mutual, though I kept that a secret, carefully guarded in my own heart; for I looked forward to the keen anguish of disappointed love. Colonel Woodley was the amiable object of my solicitude, the nephew and heir of my reverend protectress. I could not expect her sanction to a marriage so unequal; and I used in vain every effort to recall my truant heart. The colonel had apartments near the square, and was a daily visiter; but at Linden-hall, Berkshire, a beautiful seat of Mrs. Woodley's, he was, every summer, that lady's guest.

There was a music-room, in a laurel grove, some distance from the house, fitted up with large recesses full of books. I was sitting one day in this sweet retirement playing a pensive air on my lute, when Colonel Woodley entered; I rose to withdraw; he gently detained me, and made a fervent avowal of his passion; and concluded by assuring me, that all his wishes centered in the hope of soon addressing me by the tender appellation of his beloved wife. I replied, that though highly sensible of his merit, it was impossible for me to avail myself of the honour he proposed. "Impossible, Miss Melford! you surprise me! why impossible? Is another in possession of your amiable heart?" I blushed, and replied in the negative. This gave rise to a tender argument between us; my assumed indifference was not proof

against his entreaties, and I at length avowed the interest he had made in my heart.

He was enraptured; but I damped his transport by declaring that I must leave Linden-hall and him forever; for I could not act so dishonorably by my dear Mrs. Woodley, as to marry her nephew clandestinely; and it was not probable that she would ever consent to such an alliance.—"Allow me, dear Charlotte," said the colonel, "to consult my aunt; you rank high in her estimation; she is not swayed by avarice, or prejudiced to worldly opinions; you are conscious she regards genuine worth more than wealth:—I will seek her, and"—"not for the world," I exclaimed; "I cannot consent; it would be the height of presumption in me to sanction it. Suffer me to depart, and let us mutually strive to obliterate from our minds this unfortunate attachment."—"Never!" said the colonel. We were interrupted by a rustling near us. I turned round, and perceived Mrs. Woodley coming forth from a recess where she had been reading previous to my entering the music room. She took my hand, and placing it within that of her nephew's, said, "Thus let me, dear, virtuous Charlotte, reward your worth."

The colonel received the gift with rapture: never were there three happier persons together. An early day was appointed for the nuptials. Mr. Chapman came down to Linden-hall for the express purpose of acting as father on the joyful occasion: he sincerely rejoiced at my happy prospects, and made me a present of some valuable trinkets. "Sophia," said the good old man, "I think more lovely than yourself; but of what avail is beauty without prudence. I gave her a severe lecture when she waited on me

to receive her money; yet I fear she will not profit by it; for she had scarce patience to listen to me, though I made her a benevolent offer if she would return to the paths of virtue; I could not have said more had she been my own and only child."

The colonel, Mrs. Woodley, and myself, formed one household; we could not even bear the idea of separation. We remained three months after our marriage at Linden-hall, and then returned to Berkeley-square. Blest with an excellent husband, kind friends, and splendid affluence, I had yet a corroding care—my twin sister, my Sophia. With the approbation of the colonel and his aunt I strove to trace her out, (for I had no reserves from them,) that we might endeavour to bring her to a right way of thinking, and place her in a retirement where she would be comfortable, and not disgrace us; but our efforts did not meet with the desired success. I had been married above three years, and had two lovely children before that event took place.

I was at breakfast one morning with my family, when I was informed Mrs. Brent wanted to speak to me: she waited in my dressing-room, and I went to her as soon as the *dejeuner* was removed. I saw, by her countenance, that she had something of a pathetic nature to impart: I asked the cause. "Your sister, madam!"—"My sister!—what of her?—Speak! do you know Sophia?"—"You shall hear, my dear madam, what I have to relate. The other evening, as I was returning home from purchasing a few articles in Fleet market, I was attracted by a crowd of people surrounding a wretched looking young woman who had fainted; when she recovered, I asked her where she lived, and offered to conduct

her home; she said, 'I have no home!' and again relapsed. I recollected my poor deceased daughter, and I pitied this houseless child of want. I had her conveyed to my house: I procured comfortable nourishment, and administered some small portion of it from time to time; but she went out of one fit into another, till I began to fear for her existence. I examined her pocket book, not from motives of curiosity, but to discover, if possible, to whom she belonged. Gracious heaven! I had soon ample proof that she was the sister of my beloved, respected Mrs. Woodley. Towards morning she became more composed. I took no notice of the knowledge I had gained, but asked her if I should send to any person that knew her; she replied in the negative, adding, 'that she would rather die with hunger than expose her wretched state to those allied to her; for imprudence has,' she continued, 'reduced me to what you see.'" I gave Mrs. Brent some money and an assurance that I would soon visit my sister.

In the afternoon I went, accompanied by the colonel and his aunt. Mrs. Brent was giving my sister some warm wine as we entered the room. Her meagre pallid appearance was truly affecting: our meeting was pathetic—too much so to describe, the remembrance of it is yet too much for me. I gently reproached her for not acquainting me with her distress; she replied, that she could not endure that I should triumph over her, and witness what I predicted would be the consequence of her imprudence, which had indeed come to pass; though, in one sense, she added, poverty and desertion had been a benefit, for it had brought her to contrite repentance; her sufferings had been severe, but not uncommon.

be a warning to the fair sex; she had expe-
all the degradations attending illicit connex-
sick, pennyless, and without a second gar-
cover her reduced frame, she was turned
street by her inhuman landlady; and after
ng from place to place, during all the hor-
amine, she fainted at a door where she had
solicited a halfpenny.

Woodley and the colonel assisted me in com-
my sister, and rewarding Mrs. Brent, who
ly buried her only surviving child. I engag-
worthy woman to attend my sister, and the
r removed them to pleasant lodgings adjacent
-Park; and at Sophia's request, I sent a
clergyman to attend her every morning: her
o health was but slow; but as soon as she
overed sufficiently to travel, my dear colonel
handsome annuity on my sister, to which
apman made some addition.

hose South Wales for her residence. Mrs.
sides with her. Her pious regular life gains

She has had several offers of marriage, but
at propriety has refused them all, under the
aving once suffered a severe disappointment
eart, which had determined her not to mar-
t would have been absurd in her to have
the real cause.

tters are a comfort to me; they breathe re-
enitence; and we constantly correspond.—
nel and Mrs. Woodley often deign to notice
my epistles: it is a maxim of theirs to re-
r the repentant sinner.

THE END.

THE

ORPHAN OF THE CASTLE;

A GOTHIC STORY.

NEAR the east coast of England, about 8 miles from Berwick-upon-Tweed, and on the German ocean, stands a little spot called Holy Island, once the capital of the North, and the see of a bishop; but time, that changes all things, has removed the spiritual government to Durham, and laid in ruins a castle, and a monastery, the remains of which serve only now to recall to mind the strength and piety of our Gothic ancestors.

Lindisfarne is the name of the castle as well as the monastery, both of which are conjectured to have been built soon after the Conquest, or some time at least, before the time of the Crusades.

Edward de Courcy, a valiant young nobleman, and one of the favourites and companions of Richard in his famous expedition to the Holy Land, obtained this castle as a perpetual domain for himself and heirs forever from the hands of his imprudent, though generous monarch, for his military services in the siege of St. John of Arc, where our gallant countrymen have since so eminently distinguished themselves against the marauding French arms. It had been, as before observed, of great strength and consequence; but by failure of issue, had reverted into possession of the Crown. From this time it was suffered to fall into decay; and possessing some remains of its ancient gothic magnificence, a numerous and fierce banditti got possession of the place, dilapidated

defaced it until they were driven out by the neighbouring Barons, assisted by the king's troops; yet enough remained visible to impress the mind with an idea of its former grandeur and sublimity. In this situation it became again a royal bequest to the noble Baron Mortimer St. Mar, who, at the age of twenty-five, took for a wife the beautiful Lady Edith, only daughter of Lord Broomland, whose ancestors descended from De Courcy, the first possessors of this castle.

Mortimer in his early youth, had imbibed all the enthusiasm of the age of chivalry; but, after his marriage, his time was entirely domesticated with his lady, who in three years time presented him with an heir to the noble title of Mortimer. This event was the cause of much festivity at the castle; and the peasantry in the neighbourhood partook of the Baron's hospitality. But, alas! all human blessings are of short duration: a fever removed her from the side of her affectionate husband, and plunged him and his domestics in the deepest distress. The resignation of Lady Edith was exemplary; and on the ninth day from the beginning of her illness, this pious and beautiful lady gave up her spirit for the happier regions of heaven.

The Baron's grief was of that kind, that it shrunk from observation; to indulge it, he would often retire to the most unfrequented part of the castle, where he indulged his melancholy with the flow of unavailing tears for the loss of an affectionate wife. In this hopeless manner, day after day, and night after night, did he mourn his loss, often vowing never again to know peace or joy in the world. But time, which effaces the deepest impressions from the hardest substances, alleviated his sorrow, and, by the persuasion

of his friends, he was induced to relax from his grief: in short, he resolved again to engage in the busy scenes of war, which were then carrying on in the Holy Land. He was in his prime, and his former youthful services had not been forgotten, so that he soon got into command; but, previous to his departure, he dispatched a messenger with a letter to his brother, communicating to him his intentions, and particularly recommending his infant son Mortimer to his care and affection, In this letter he did not forget his ancient domestics, the arrangement for whose future support he deferred until his brother's arrival.

The meeting of these two brothers occurred on Christmas-day. Twelve years had elapsed since they had seen each other. The cause of their separation no more existed, and the remembrance of it even was obliterated in Mortimer's mind, whose generosity was only equalled by the distress occasioned by the loss of his lady. But Lord Edward, (for so he was called by courtesy and patent,) his brother, still entertained the latent disposition of malevolence, the propensity to which was not a little inflamed by his religious education in Lindisfarne Abbey. Obsequious attention to royal prerogative, and the crooked policy of a corrupted court, had early taught him the arts of prevarication and duplicity; yet he carried himself with so much seeming affection to his brother Mortimer, that he soon obtained his utmost confidence; and in a few days the preparations for his departure announced to all his servants his final resolution of spending some years, at least, in foreign parts.

After having made the necessary dispositions for his travels, and settled some points of importance with his domestics, he spent the short interval of a

few days in consoling and weeping over his infant son Mortimer St. Mar. His uncle, Lord Edward, had taken upon himself to be his guardian during his father's absence; and promised to transmit to him, as often as an occasion offered, an account of his health, welfare, and progress in learning.

His time of departure arrived; and, after being accompanied by his dependants several miles on the road, they severally took their leave with tears and benedictions; nor did they lose sight of him till the parting rays of light absorbed the object from their sight.

Ten months elapsed before any tidings were received at the castle of Lord Mortimer; when one evening, an old wounded knight, named Count Nerva, sought admission at the castle gate with a letter to the Lord. It was written by its former possessor in the last agonies of death, in which he very pathetically lamented the helpless fate of his orphan child, recommending him most devoutly to heaven, and very earnestly to the protection of his uncle; nor were his servants forgotten in this pressing epistle. The old knight (Nerva) reported, that he died gloriously in the field of battle of his wounds, after having penned and charged him with the delivery of that letter.

The Heir of the Castle was happily insensible of the loss of such a parent; and Lord Edward bore the tidings without much apparent sorrow. A great change had taken place in the castle. The servants of the Baron had been, one after another, dismissed from their employ, and Lord Edward's domestics occupied their situations. The principal apartments were occupied by sycophantic dependants; and nothing remained in its former state, but the little nursery of the infant orphan of the late Lord. The care

of this important charge had been from the first assigned to an old and trusty servant named Edwin, who had been a servant in the family from the infancy of Lord Mortimer himself. Upon the news of the death of his lord and master, his grief knew no bounds; he tore his vestments and his hair; and, distracted with the violence of his emotion, ran up to the nursery in the tower, where, snatching up the child, who was at play on the floor, he knelt with him in his arms before the picture of his lord, and vehemently exclaimed, "O thou most precious relic of this noble house, where is now thy parent and protector!" These words were no sooner uttered, than an officious dependant of Lord Edward's, who was in waiting on the young baron, carried the words to his master, and repeating them with additional incidents, completed the ruin of this true and affectionate servant; for the next morning he was called into the hall, where he was informed his services would for the future be dispensed with; and, with that, paying him his arrears of salary, ordered him to depart.

The good Edwin withdrew with humility. He had perceived the approach of the gathering storm; and he had, by every prudent means in his power, endeavoured to delay his dismission, which for some time past he had hourly expected to receive. Imperious by habit, Lord Edward he knew was inflexible, and opposition to his command would only irritate him farther. It was true he had been placed by his noble lord, Mortimer, about the person of his child, as he had in his infancy experienced the most tender attachment; but the authority that had placed him there was no more; and, much as he regretted the loss of his former station, he submitted to it with resignation, without attempting to exculpate himself in

asure whatever, but putting up an ejaculato-
er to heaven, for the safety of the heir of Mor-
ınd invoking the shade of his old lord to hover
d defend his child, he at last reached an hos-
peasant's hovel, where he intended to abide
re favourable opportunity should draw him out.
he events of this world are not governed by
hes of weak mortals, and death pays no re-
innocence more than to guilt. An epidemic
er, soon after Edwin's departure, seized the
St. Mar, the amiable heir of Lord Mortimer,
it was reported, he had caught from the sinis-
sses of a bare-footed mendicant friar, who
fered to visit the nursery in the guise of a con-
a female attendant on the child. The dis-
ıade rapid progress, and the thirteenth day
l him to the communion of saints.

is disaster Lord Edward seemed to take on;
grief, though neither loud nor vehement, was
For several days he refused nourishment,
ld admit to his presence any of his household;
of day was shut from his apartment, and he
ounded indulgence to his lamentations. But
funeral rites were performed, and St. Mar
ıe vault of the castle, he appeared in the
l, and received the compliments of the no-
his accession to the barony and honours of
ne.

sposition of Lord Edward was, by nature,
overbearing, morose and irritable; to his
ıaughty and supercilious, though fawning
uious to those above him; but, notwith-
he malice of his heart, he had so well con-
venom of his nature by long practising dis-
, that he had imposed upon his unsuspec-

ing brother, who, by constituting him guardian to his child, had invested him with all power and authority at the castle. Now lord of that castle, and jealous of his power, without any claim to its respect, he was by turns a tyrant and a parasite; for though he exacted, by disposition, the homage of his dependants, with abject meanness he was himself a slave to the smile of power; unsocial by nature, and extremely avaricious, the sounds of mirth and festivity were banished from the mansion of Lindisfarne, the hospitable banquet no longer appeared; and the gates of the castle reluctantly unfolded their ponderous hinges, even when the surly porter refused not admittance to the pilgrim and the stranger.

The pride of the Baron gathered consequence by seclusion, and his austerity rendered him displeasing to the neighbouring nobility. His friendship he confined to one person, who sometimes visited him in his retirement. This was Sir Bevis of York, who passed some months every summer at the castle, during the first seven years that Lord Edward was its master; but at the end of that period he went abroad; and, after his departure, the Baron seldom went without the boundary of his castle walls.

Nineteen years after the death of young St. Mar, Richard returned from the Holy Land. All England rejoiced at the presence of their beloved Monarch, and the capital was thronged with every description of persons, to welcome his enlargement from captivity. To show himself on this public instance Lord Edward emerged from his retirement, and crossing the sea, repaired in sullen state to the court of England; he paid his duty to the King: but his jaundiced mind turning, with disgust, from scenes of

pleasure which his gloomy soul could no longer enjoy, he heartily set out on his return to the castle.—On his returning back, he narrowly escaped shipwreck; but when he landed, he mounted his horse, impatient to arrive at his mansion, as the only theatre where his grandeur could be properly exhibited; he pressed his courser with impetuosity, and without delay, proceeded towards Lindisfarne. At the close of the day, a storm from the east seemed fast approaching, the hills gathered rain, a heavy black cloud darkened the road before him, and a crimson streak of sky here and there added to the tremendous appearance of the bursting storm. The rain now fell in torrents, the blue lightning played about his face, and the thunder rolled towards him. In vain they sought a shelter from the rain; the heath before them was a desolate waste; and the moon, which at intervals afforded a faint light, only served to show them the dreariness of the plain. Lord Edward pressed vehemently forward, and soon discovered at some distance, the appearance of a dwelling. He advanced towards it; but a small wicket impeded his progress; his horse he knew, could easily clear it; but in vain he used his spur, the steed refused. The fiery spirit of Edward, impatient at the storm, which now became more violent, again prompted him to force his courser. The horse reared, plunged, and, rearing a second time, fell back upon his Lord. The attendants who stood aloof, now ran to his assistance; they raised him from the ground, and saw, by the light of the moon, which soon after shone out from between the clouds, that the building before them was surrounded by a deep moat, over which was a drawbridge, which the wicker opened to. The bridge was drawn up; and had Lord Edward's scour-

ser obeyed his rider, they must both have been precipitated into a deep ditch, the sides and bottom of which were full of long iron spikes.

The servants calling loudly for assistance, a glimmering light appeared at one end of the building, and slowly moved within the grated windows. They waited some minutes, but no one appearing, they again demanded help. A bell tolled from the turret in the centre of the mansion, and a large door being opened, an old man, in the habit of a priest, came forward, and seeing the person of Lord Edward in distress, immediately let down the bridge. They passed over it, and following their reverend conductor, entered into a chapel, where the brethren of St. Anthony's monastery were at vespers. The superior stood at the altar, and beside him knelt a youth habited as a knight. His armour was of polished steel; and his crested helmet being off, discovered a countenance animated and beautiful. His person, though he hardly appeared twenty years of age, was lofty and commanding. The service was interrupted; and the youth ran to the assistance of the expiring knight. He unbuckled his helmet, wiped the blood from his mouth, and Lord Edward discovered signs of life. He breathed short, and convulsively, groaned with extreme anguish, and opening his eyes, they became fixed upon the stranger, when, almost starting from their orbits, his limbs shook, and the blood-vessel which he had broken by his fall, again sent forth its crimson torrent. He attempted to speak; but finding himself unable, his impatience, accelerated his danger. His glaring eye-balls darted their angry frowns by turns on the group that surrounded him, and fearfully resting them on the stranger, his groans became more

deep and inward. A suffocation, which they apprehended, soon came on; his respiration grew more difficult, and, after a faint struggle, he expired; but his eyes, over which death had laid a thick film, were unclosed, and still bent upon the warrior, who turned from the horrid spectacle; and the corpse being removed into one of the cells, joined with the holy brethren in prayers for the departed. After mass was performed, the superior pressed the stranger to repose himself for that night at the monastery; but the storm being abated, and the moon shining with unclosed lustre, he declined his invitation, and gracefully returning thanks for their hospitality, mounted his horse, and pursued his track across the heath.

The attendants of the deceased Baron, Lord Edward, partook of what the convent afforded, and being seated round a good fire, Edmund, Lord Edward's page, eagerly inquired about the stranger, and received for answer, that he had been driven thither early in the evening by the storm, and at their usual hour of prayer, had joined them in their devotions; this was all they could inform him. They were struck, they said, by his appearance; and would the rules of civility (for, retired as they lived, they were not ignorant of them) have allowed them to ask his name, they certainly should have demanded it: they supposed he was in the service of the King, as the cross on his shoulder was a token he fought against the infidels. Edmund, after a pause, said, "I have seen his likeness somewhere, but cannot immediately recollect where." "Your thoughts meet mine, (replied Hubert, another of Lord Edward's servants,) and I can help you to the place. He is the image of that picture at home in the great hall of our Lord's brother, who died in the Holy

Land." In this and other discourse they passed the time till day appeared, when Edmund despatched a servant to the castle; and as Lord Edward had no friends to respect him while alive, no one mourned when the tidings of his death were made known at Lindisfarne. He was, without much ceremony, interred in the vault at the feet of young St. Mar; and with him the name and title expired.

When his death was announced to the King, as Richard nobly rewarded those champions who had signalized themselves in the Crusade, he bestowed upon Reginald Longford, the title, castle, and domains.

Among the foremost of the warriors who had given proofs of their prowess in this memorable cause, was Allan Fitz-Robert, a youth of mean birth, but undaunted courage; his noble person and intrepid spirit had been admired and rewarded by Lord Longford, who had appointed him his esquire. Even Richard himself owed his life to his valour, and ever after highly regarded him.

He conferred upon him the honour of knighthood; appointed him a station near his person; and when he publicly declared the service for which requited him, pronounced his advancement to be the reward of his valour. And when this beloved Monarch was restored to his people, after his unjust detention by Leopold, the Duke of Austria, Fitz-Robert was honoured with his friendship, and daily received fresh proofs of his regard. He was entrusted with his confidence, and was employed in a service of secresy, when the storm forced him to take shelter in the monastery of Lindisfarne; for Allan Fitz-Robert was the stranger who had beheld the dying agonies of Lord Edward and joined in prayers for the repose of his soul.

Lord Longford, whose friendship for the youth daily increased, the more he became acquainted with his virtues, and the more felt his partiality justified, was anxious to introduce him to his lady, who had already taken up her residence in the Castle of Lindisfarne.

Upon this transaction, Allan Fitz-Robert obtained permission to pass a short time with the Baron; and at the end of the fifth day, they arrived within sight of the mansion.

The horn was sounded by Longford's page, and the porter opened the gate. They passed the bridge, and entering the great door of the castle, crossed a quadrangle, and met the Lady Longford at the entrance of the great hall. She welcomed them to the mansion with all the transport of true affection, rejoiced at the presence of her Lord, and, with an air of sweetness and dignity, extended her hand to their guest. He had respectfully taken it, when an exclamation from the Lady drew his attention; and he had hardly time to remove from where he stood, when a heavy suit of armour, belonging to Lord Edward, the latter master of the castle, which happened to stand just above him, fell from its station with a ponderous violence on the ground. It was of great weight, and would most probably have injured Fitz-Robert considerably, if the Lady, who had seen it totter, had not warned him by her exclamation. The noise drew together the domestics, who gazed with wonder at the armour; but, happy to behold their master, pressed round him to welcome his arrival. One venerable person stood behind the rest, whom the Lady Longford particularly introduced. His name, she said, was Edwin, and he had formerly lived in the castle, a favoured and faithful

servant of the Baron Lord Mortimer; but that his successor had dismissed him from his service, and that he had since that period been struggling hard with poverty and age. "On my arrival here, (said she,) he prayed that he might sometimes have permission to visit the castle, and, while it remained in its present state, be permitted to feast his sight with the contemplation of his master's portrait. I have (continued she) assigned him a station in our household, and, by adding to his happiness, have considerably augmented my own; and I know my beloved Longford will rejoice that his Matilda has soothed the declining life of a faithful servant. The Baron pressed the hand of his beloved wife, and turning to Edwin, regarded him with attention. The old man had advanced into the middle of the hall; his face bore stronger marks of sorrow than age, and his countenance was intelligent, but melancholy; he leaned a good deal on his staff, his long white hair was parted at the top, and neatly combed, hung upon his shoulders. The tears streamed down his cheeks, as he listened to the Lady's recital; and his voice was broken by his emotions, as he thanked her for her goodness.

At night, the banquet was prepared in the great hall, and during the repast, Fitz-Robert regarded its loftiness and grandeur with a kind of solemn admiration. Its roof was arched, and carried to the height of the castle, the floor was of black marble. The banners of knighthood were suspended from the sides of the apartment, which were decorated in different parts with trophies of military valour. At the upper end of the hall stood the chair of state; the lance and shield were crossed over the arms of Lord Mortimer, which sustained a helmet adorned

with an enormous plume; these were placed over the chair, which was covered with crimson velvet. But Allan's attention was particularly attracted by two portraits at the lower end of the apartment; one represented a warrior completely armed, with the vizor of his helm turned up; the other a lady, young and beautiful. The warrior seemed preparing for battle, and his look bespoke resolution and courage. The lady's aspect appeared strongly pictured with resignation, fortitude, and love. The Baroness remarked his attention to the portraits, and said, "These are the objects of Edwin's idolatry: they are not, he affirms, half so beautiful as the originals; but we must make allowance for the old man's partiality to his master and mistress."

The evening passed with rapidity; the clock had struck twelve before they thought of parting, when the Baron conducted Fitz-Robert to his apartment, which was situated near his own, on the western side of the castle. A long gallery, which had two doors at the end, led to the state chambers: one of these doors opened to the youth's, and the adjoining one, which was strongly fastened, the Baron told him, had been formerly used as a passage to the chapel; but that they had never opened it, having always gone through the quadrangle, or square of the castle.

Longford having seen that his friend was properly accommodated, retired to his own chamber. Fitz-Robert looked round his apartment, which was large and lofty; it was hung with tapestry that represented a tournament; his bed was of crimson velvet, with arms similar to those in the hall placed in the dome; a heavy lance and target were crossed over the chimney, and a large picture fronted the bed's foot. The picture represented a group of figures that surround-

ed a lady, who was sitting under a canopy with a child in her lap; a gentleman stood leaning over the back of her chair, looking at a man who seemed pressing forward to view the infant. He raised the taper, to examine the figures distinctly, and saw upon the child's wrist, the exact form of an arrow. He drew up her sleeve, and smiled at the oddness of the circumstance: as he had a similar mark on his own arm. He looked at the picture for some minutes with the warmest admiration; it was done by the hand of a master; and he applauded the judgment and taste of Longford, who he had informed him, that it was his intention to continue in its present state the gift of his sovereign. Fitz-Robert's rest was broken and disturbed; his sleep was unrefreshing; and his mind occupied by dreams of conversation with the ancient inhabitants of the castle; the forms of persons he had never seen before, hovering round his bed, and he awaked in the morning harassed and uncomfortable. They assembled at breakfast; and that day, and the following, were passed in receiving the congratulations of numerous visitors.

Edwin appeared to have renewed his age. He had become his master's confidential attendant, and often, while looking at him, tears silently rolled down his face. He frequently entertained him with the praises of the late Baron Mortimer and his Lady, and expatiated with rapture on their numerous virtues. This faithful historian was never so happy, as when he drew Fitz-Robert's attention to his discourse. The smile of triumph lighted up his features, when he related the prowess of his old master; but the recital was concluded with a sigh, that the virtues he recorded should sleep in the grave, where he himself would most gladly lie down for ever.

On the third night, he appeared at the bottom of the stairs, and requested permission to light Fitz-Robert to his apartment. This office he continued to perform; and one night, as they passed through the gallery, he observed him transiently looking at the pictures. He stopped, and pointing at the different personages that came within his own recollection, enlarged on their various excellences. A venerable lady, whose portrait he particularly noticed, was, he said, Horatio St. Mar, mother of his Lord. She was in a religious habit, having founded a monastery, on the death of her husband, of which she had been abbess, and her great learning and piety had during her life been the theme of every tongue. The youth regarded the picture with admiration, and reluctantly passed on to the next. This represented a warrior, whose face he seemed to have a faint recollection of having seen. Edwin made no comment on this personage, and quickly passed on to the portrait of his mistress, the Lady St. Mar; but Fitz-Robert still looking at the warrior, Edwin told him, that was Lord Edward, his master's brother, the late possessor of the castle, who had been killed by a fall from his horse near Lindisfarne Abbey. Fitz-Robert, by the mention of this circumstance, immediately recollected that the person, whose death he had witnessed at the monastery, strongly resembled the picture before him. "I was present at his dissolution," he rejoined, "and never beheld so melancholy a sight; he died in great agony, and visibly struggled against the approach of death." "Oh! (said Edwin, in a whisper, and looked fearfully around him, as if he would not be heard,) he never enjoyed himself while alive, and no wonder he should shrink from death."

Fitz-Robert took the taper from Edwin, and raising it to examine the frowning visage of Edward, the light suddenly grew pale, and was soon perfectly extinguished. He told the old man to wait, while he ran to his own apartment to light it at his fire. They were in total darkness, and Fitz-Robert cautiously groping for his door, found it, as he thought, a-jar. He crossed the threshold, but scarce had he gone a step beyond it, before he found the ground give way beneath his feet, and he fell, with great force, a considerable depth. He was much bruised; and being without any light, was apprehensive of falling still further, if he attempted to gain the gallery. He called loudly on Edwin, who having heard him fall, had knocked at the Baron's chamber, to beg he would go to his assistance. Longford, who had not yet retired to his bed, opened his door, and advanced towards the place from whence he heard his friend's voice; but when he saw by the light that he held in his hand, that the bolted door was thrown open, and that Fitz-Robert answered him from thence, his astonishment deprived him of speech. He looked at Edwin for information, who, pale as death, could only relate their employment, and that Fitz-Robert had only gone to his apartment to relight his taper. Longford ran to the assistance of his friend, and with some difficulty helped him to regain the gallery. The Baron then said, for that night, he should suspend any further inquiries; but the next morning he would find out the truth. Edwin looked with meaning, and crossing himself devoutly, said, "God, in his appointed time, will discover all things!" They placed the bar across the door; but its weight required all the strength that the Baron and his friend possessed to lift it.

They then separated for the night, and Fitz-Robert, for the first time, turned the key of his apartment. He sat down by his fire, of which only a few dying embers remained, and revolving what had passed, thought succeeded thought; and he so deeply meditated upon the many events of his life, that his candle was expiring in the socket, before he perceived that he must make haste to undress himself, or he should soon be left in darkness.

The clock had just struck one, when a noise in the gallery drew his attention. He listened, and distinctly heard the sound of footsteps; a light rustling of garments appeared to proceed from the unfrequented passage. He opened his door; the noise ceased, and he attributed it to his imagination. He advanced a few paces into the gallery; but all was silent; upon which he returned into his chamber, and retired to rest, with a mind devoid of fear, though not perfectly tranquillized from the events of that uight.

In the morning, he strove to recollect the wild excursions of his sleeping fancy; he remembered, that at one time he supposed he had involuntarily drawn aside his curtain to look at the picture, from whence he thought the Lady descended; who having appproached his bed, took him by the hand, and regarded with attention the mark upon his wrist: a warrior, he fancied, then entered his room, and bade him rise, when each taking a hand, they led him down the bolted passage. At another time, he had imagined he was at the court of Richard, who created him a Baron of the realm. These visions of the night appeared so real, that there were moments when he could harly dispossess himself of the idea, but that the Lady really had conducted him to the

adjoining tower, and that her descent from the picture was no illusion.

He met the Baron and his Lady at breakfast; they discoursed of the unexplored passage, and various conjectures occupied their thoughts and conversation, till their repast was concluded, and each had retired to dress for the day.

When Matilda had retired also, the Baron summoned all his servants to the great hall, and threatened them with his displeasure if they evaded the truth, promising his forgiveness to whoever had been led by curiosity to open the bolted apartment. They all declared, that (since they must speak) none of them ever willingly went near that end of the castle; and as for the room which joined the tower, it was well known to have been shut up for years before his Lordship was master of the castle. The Baron looked angry, and sternly amazed, and addressing himself to Edwin, who was listening attentively (but without speaking) to what passed, asked him whose this apartment was when he lived in the castle. "My Lord's," replied Edwin, "till his departure for the Holy Land; then the young Baron occupied it; but I was dismissed soon after the melancholy event of my Lord's death was made known here: some of the domestics, however, informed me, that a few days after the interment of the young Lord, the Baron caused all the rooms at this end of the castle to be shut up; and removed himself from the chamber in which your Lordship sleeps, to one on the eastern side of the mansion." "Was ever any cause assigned for this removal?" said the Baron. "Only this," answered Edwin, "that his Lordship could not bear the sight of places which so forcibly reminded him of persons whose loss so much afflicted him." "What apartments are there beyond the door at the end of the gallery?" Inquired the Baron. "Two, my Lord," replied Edwin; "one on the right which was the confessional; that on the left was formerly occupied by Father Launcelot."

Fitz-Robert, during this conversation, appeared buried in thought. He was roused, however, from this reverie, by the Baron's resolution of exploring the Haunted Tower, which he found was the name it was commonly known by. Fitz-Robert offered to accompany him; and as Edwin was the only person acquainted with the situation of the place, the

Baron ordered him to lead the way. Being each provided with a light, they proceeded to the bolted door, which was opened with great difficulty. Edwin advanced first; but the wind, which in opening the door, had ascended the stairs, blew out his torch. Fitz-Robert, who was next him, then took the lead, and descended; the Baron followed, and Edwin had no sooner put his foot upon the second stair, than the door fell fast behind him.

At the approach of the light, the birds that had been for many years in quiet possession of the building, flew from their nests, the walls had in many places gone to decay, and the creeping ivy had found its way through; the stairs were much broken, and by the constant damp were covered with green moss. A projecting step, that jutted from the loose earth, had broken Fitz-Robert's fall, which, as they passed the spot, they stepped to examine, and Edwin picked up something from the ground. It was to appearance an old piece of copper; but rubbing it upon the floor, it acquired an air of brightness, and holding it to the light, he exclaimed, "It is a gold clasp, that was worn by my young Lord." They arrived at the landing-place, and found both doors open.—They entered first the habitation of the holy man. The furniture was going rapidly to decay, It consisted of a pallet bed, a table, a crucifix, a small picture of the virgin, his cowl, a few Latin Manuscripts, and an earthen lamp. Sir Allen Fitz-Robert stumbled on a small bundle that lay on the floor, which they took up, and examined. Within was a child's vest, of white satin, the border curiously worked; and a clasp, the fellow to that found on the stairs.

They examined the apartment with care, and turning up the straw bed found several mourning habiliments, a scarf, and a beaver adorned with black feathers, a lance, and a shield with the arms of Lindisfarne painted on it; the dress had evidently been worn at a funeral. "Who attended young St. Mar as chief mourner?" said the Baron to Edwin. "Sir Bevis of York, my Lord," replied the latter.—"Were you present at the interment?" "I was. A multitude of spectators assembled in the chapel; I mixed with the crowd, and mourned, with real sorrow, the early death of the young heir." "And what," said the Baron, "became of the knight who attended your young Lord to the vault of

his ancestors?" "Some years after," replied Edwin; "it was rumoured among the servants of the castle, that he had undertaken a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and died on his return home."

They then left the cell of Father Launcelot, and crossing the platform, passed through the confessional into the chapel. They had great difficulty to open the door which led into it; but, after infinite labour, accomplished their purpose. They then repaired to Lady Matilda, whom they found in the gallery, where they all looked with amazement at the door which had fallen fast of itself as they were descending.

The Baroness was informed of all they had seen; and the bundle, which they had found in father Launcelot's cell, was again opened. Her astonishment equalled theirs; and though the Lord Longford reluctantly harboured unfavourable thoughts of the deceased Lord Edward, he could not help giving way to suspicions, that all had not gone as it ought in the castle of Lindisfarne.

Edwin retired to his apartment, and opening the treasure committed to his charge, contemplated with wonder and attention, the mantle and vest. These sacred pledges of a noble name, now buried in the grave, he folded to his breast, and silently invoked the Avenger of wickedness to disclose in his own good time the fate of the infant St. Mar. That he was at peace in the vault of the chapel, was a truth that Edwin was well convinced of; but the garment found in the cell, the strange events of the western tower, the desertion of those apartments during Lord Edward's life, and the fall of the stranger down the unfrequented passages, all perplexed him with conjecture. He hoped he knew not what. The name of Mortimer was no more, and he still adored the portrait of his Lord; yet his eyes now more frequently dwelt on the youth Fitz-Robert; and irresistible attachment to the stranger had rooted itself in his bosom, and his thoughts involuntarily rested upon him.

The conversation at the castle the whole of that day turned on no other subject than the Haunted Tower. The more they thought of it, the more the mystery increased. The door had certainly opened without human assistance, and had closed also without help. This last circumstance, indeed, might be accounted for by a draft of wind; but it was firmly fastened also, and every endeavour to open it again

now proved ineffectual; it was necessary, however, it should appear to the domestics, as if what had happened was not thought worthy of regard. At night, the great hall was filled with visitors, and the usual diversions took place; the festivity that the Baron promoted in the evening dissipated the alarms of the day; and when the hour for retirement arrived, the inhabitants of the castle slept in peace, devoid of apprehension, even of the Haunted Tower.

But Fitz-Robert, whose apartment was more nearly connected with it, alone took a retrospect of what had past. Though utterly devoid of superstition, he was firmly convinced that a superior power had directed the events of the day. The miraculous opening of the door, the garment found in Father Launcelot's cell, and the noise he had heard in the gallery the preceding night, all impressed him with a thorough belief, that the tower adjoining his chamber had been the place of action for some great work of iniquity; and he thought it not improbable, but that he might be chosen as the instrument of Providence, to discover the secret. His fall into the unfrequented passage, the door of which must have opened to receive him, gave birth to this opinion; and he determined to obey the will of Heaven, should he be called upon to answer the summons. He had undressed, and was lying down in his bed, when a rustling on the opposite side of his apartment, and a low voice, pronouncing the name of St. Mar, made him start from his pillow, and hastily undraw his curtain. He looked attentively, and listened, but neither saw nor heard any thing more. He composed himself again to rest; and relying on that providence which had hitherto so manifestly protected him, he was just falling into a slumber, when the same voice, but louder, calling on St. Mar, awaked him. He drew his sword, which always lay upon his pillow, and undrawing the curtain, had set one foot on the floor, when his faculties were suspended, and his whole frame petrified by what he saw. The same figure he had beheld in his sleep, the first night of his arrival at the castle, now passed slowly before him, and waving her hand with a majestic air, bade him in a solemn tone, to repair to the monastery of Lindisfarne; and slowly retreating towards the door of his chamber, in the same solemn tone, bade him remember, and pointing towards the picture, said, "THY MOTHER WARNS THEE!"

Thrice he attempted to speak, but his voice died away ere he could articulate a single sentence: a secret power deprived him of utterance, and his straining eye-balls followed her to the door. A faint light streamed around the vision, and encompassing the fleeting shadow, enveloped her in its brightness; the luminous appearance still irradiated his chamber; he extended his arm towards it, and exclaimed, "O! if thou art not an illusion of the brain, tell me why this command!" But the phantom had disappeared ere he could utter his adjuration. He threw himself on the bed, and it was some minutes before he could recover himself from the perturbation into which he had been thrown. The figure of the lady was deeply impressed upon his memory, and exactly resembled the portrait of the Baroness of Mortimer in the great hall; but the words "THY MOTHER WARNS THEE," vibrated in his ear. The command to repair to the monastery of Lindisfarne was inexplicable; but he resolved to obey the mandate, and leave the rest to the disposal of Heaven. He waited with impatience for the morning, and when he heard the Baron quit his chamber, joined him in the gallery. They descended the stairs; and Fitz-Robert, with an agitated countenance, and a voice that betrayed the perturbation of his mind, related to him the appearance of the spectre, and her command to repair to the monastery. The Baron embraced him with fervor, and listened with attention to an account of all he had seen that night in the western apartment; and it was fixed that the following morning Fitz-Robert should quit the castle. The Baron did not wai for an invitation to accompany his friend; but feeling him self in some degree a party concerned, as Lord of the man sion where those strange events had befallen his guest, mad an immediate offer of bearing him company on his journey Fitz-Robert, he clearly saw, was the person to whom Provi dence had delegated some important discovery; as the for mer possessors of the castle had quitted the peaceful mar sion of the grave to deliver their commands to a low-bor stranger. He crossed himself with devotion; and as th family of Longford was innocent, he trusted the punishmer would only fall upon the guilty. "My Sovereign (said h bestowed upon me this noble inheritance; but if a high

ls me to resign it, I submit to its decrees." "His
ıe," said Fitz-Robert, also crossing himself.
greed to keep Lady Matilda ignorant of the real
heir departure from the castle; a mandate from the
iiring Fitz-Robert's immediate presence, was to be
ible reason, and that the Baron intended accompa-
ı part of the way. The Baroness lamented the
ir guest; and in the warmest terms, pressed him
o them, whenever he could disengage himself from
ance on the king. Fitz-Robert's heart was replete
tude; though the power of thanking her by words
d; but his looks were more expressive than the
ured eloquence: he knelt at her feet, and at last
: "On the uncertain smiles of courtly favour I
placed a precarious dependence; but though edu-
he hands of indigence, and trained to poverty from
, yet, Lady, possessed of yours and my Lord
s regard, I could forego the smiles of power, or
the cottage which ambition first caused me to de-
is declaration was made with a sincerity of heart
vident in the expression of his animated features.
to his apartment, to make the necessary prepara-
s intended departure, with a mind wholly absorbed
husiam of friendship. His affections, strong and
ted themselves on his patron, the Lord Longford,
achment whcih had every requisite to render it
. Gratitude was the basis on which the purest
had erected its structure; the character of his
ad adopted as a model for his own.
ssed that day at the castle, without the interrup-
tors; and as they meant to depart at the dawn
wing day, when the Baroness rose to retire he
ıwards her, and bowing upon the hand she pre-
, "I go, madam, to attend a summons I dare not
t though commanded by a power whose man-
respect, yet the soul of Fitz-Robert will still re-
castle of Lindisfarne. Your goodness, lady,
ıy heart, and your patronage will secure me the
e world."
wn of day, Fitz-Robert and the Baron met in
dwin, who had risen to look once more at Fitz-

Robert, stood at the door to bid them farewell. The youth thanked the old man for his attention, who falling at his feet, embraced his knees, and prayed that heaven would pour its blessings on his head. "Forgive me (said he,) but——" "But, what?" said Fitz-Robert, "Oh, (rejoined Edwin,) thou art the image of my Lord?" The youth trembled and supporting himself on the back of a chair near which he stood, inarticulately answered, "of thy lord!" "Yes, (replied Edwin,) the hero St. Mar." Lord Longford, who had quitted the hall to give some orders to his servants, at this instant returned, and told Fitz-Robert he was ready. The old man wrung his hand, and when he could no longer behold him, returned into the hall, and by regarding the portrait with increased attention, was more and more convinced, that had young St. Mar himself been alive, he could not have borne a stronger resemblance to the picture, than the youth who had just left the castle.

At the end of the second day, the travellers were within a few hours ride of the monastery, and, as the night was coming on, the Baron advised resting till the morning; but Fitz-Robert was impatient to proceed, and they arrived at the convent about midnight. The passing bell, which proclaimed an approaching dissolution, was tolling in the chapel. They obtained admittance; and the brother, who opened the gate, informed them, that the holy fathers were all assembled in the chapel, where lay Father Jerome at the point of death. It was the custom in this convent, when any member of their community was at the last extremity, to remove him into the chapel, where confession being made, absolution was given, and the holy sacrament being administered, the good fathers, as a warning to themselves, waited to witness the last sigh of their expiring brother. The strangers entered the chapel; and the awful scene that presented itself before them, caused each to turn involuntarily from the sight.

In the middle of the chapel, on a bed of straw, lay the emaciated form of the expiring father; his head was uncovered, and the woollen cloth, which barely met over his convulsed chest, was fastened round his waist by a black cord; his eyes were sunk within their sockets; his lips moved; a quick irregular hiccup agitated his frame; and

his feeble hands grasped a crucifix, on which he bent his glassy eyes. The last moment seemed arrived, and he appeared at the point of death. The venerable superior knelt by his side; and at the solemn adjuration of, "I charge you, as you are soon to stand before the presence of your God, to repent you of your sins," the almost expiring lamp of life faintly revived, and after a painful struggle for articulation, in a hollow voice, which seemed broken by anguish, the dying father uttered these words.—"The hour is indeed come, when Sir Bevis de Morney must wait the due punishment of his crimes." At the sound of this name, Fitz-Robert rushed forwards. The noise of his advancing drew the attention of the father, who, uttering a loud cry, exclaimed, "It is St. Mar himself!" A cold sweat bedewed his face, his limbs shook, he grasped the crucifix, and his eyes rolled wildly every way, but where the stranger stood: exclaiming, "Oh! if you have any mercy, remove that dreadful vision;" and deeply groaning, he called to heaven for pardon. The superior urged the necessity of being composed, as a confession of all he knew respecting the person before him, was the surest way of obtaining the pardon he petitioned for. He fearfully and irresolutely turned his eyes towards the youth, who knelt beside him, and having regarded him for a few moments, in an imploring accent said, "Tell me if it be an illusion of the brain, for, if not, it is the offspring of St. Mar." Fitz-Robert clasped his hands in an agony of expectation—"If on thy right arm (continued the penitent) there is an arrow—" The youth drew back his sleeve—A faint smile brightened the expiring man's features; he pressed the crucifix to his lips, and inarticulately said, "the hour of retribution is arrived, and justice has fallen on the guilty; the injured Orphan of the Castle is called upon to witness the shame and confession of Sir Bevis de Morney." The superior blessed these dawnings of repentance. He paused a moment, and, turning towards the youth, said, "Thy true name is Mortimer St. Mar; and thou art the image of thy father. On his retiring to the Holy Land, he entrusted thee to thy uncle's protection. Dangerous confidence! He sought thy life to inherit thy possessions; and, knowing the barbarity and villany of my nature, (for we had but one mind), proposed to me to be thy executioner.

It was reported you had caught an epidemic distemper of a child belonging to one of the domestics; your death followed in due time: and a fictitious funeral was celebrated with great pomp. During this period, you was kept with the domestic, who was intrusted with the secret, in Father Launcelot's cell. There I descended at midnight, and having taken off your upper garments, which were heavy, and too costly for that concealment we wished to preserve, in the habit of a peasant, with you in my arms, I escaped, under cover of night, the prying eye of curiosity. The domestic locked the doors of the chapel after me, and I proceeded on my way amidst the peltings of the bitterest storm I had ever remembered. A sleeping draught had been previously given you, which locked your senses in forgetfulness. I had twice attempted during the darkness of the night, to execute the commands of Lord Edward, and the last effort would have accomplished them. My poignard was raised for the stroke, and your bosom bared to receive it, when the lightning, which was almost incessant, at that instant rested its light upon your beauteous form. A smile played upon your face, and I felt a superior power arrest my arm. I determined to spare myself the crime of actual murder, and leave you in the wood, to be rescued by the mercy of some pitying traveller. At the gray of the morning, I placed you in the path that was made through the forest, and retired among the thickest of the trees. A peasant going to his morning work, heard your cries, for you had just awoke, and taking you from the ground, pressed you to his heart. His rugged countenance spoke the feelings of humanity, and planted a thousand daggers in my own bosom. I had pledged myself to execute the will of your insatiate and savage uncle, who had hired me to take away the life he was bound to protect; and a base born peasant, labouring, perhaps, under indigent poverty, had rescued you from certain death.

"I followed him at a distance, till I saw him enter a hamlet on the skirt of the forest, and then returned to the castle. I received the promised reward; but lord Edward had already experienced the pangs of an accusing conscience; he trembled when I presented the poignard, with which I told him I had taken your life; and before I quitted the mansion had entirely forsaken the western side of the castle.

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But I must hasten to conclude, for I feel that my dissolution is at hand. I went abroad in search of that rest England denied me, but there I experienced the torments of the damned. Your figure night and day constantly was present before me, and I revisited my native land more miserable than when I left it; at length distracted by remorse, and burthened by a sense of my guilt, I determined, by a life of mortification and repentance, to procure that pardon I had so little right to expect. You (turning to the superior) received me into your community; and had peace been allotted for me I should have found it here; but my mind has been harassed by perpetual tumults, and an inward decay has rapidly brought me to the grave. Three nights ago, being at prayer in my cell, the faint light of the lamp that was burning on my table, suddenly gave place to a blaze of ethereal lustre that shone round my bed; the form of Lady St. Mar presented itself to my astonished sight, and, in a voice of electrical harmony, told me, she had warned her child, who was still alive, to repair to the monastery; and bidding me repent, the bright flame again inclosed her, and in an instant my cell was in total darkness. This vision so powerfully affected my sinking frame, that it has hastened my dissolution; but I die contented, since the true heir of St. Mar will be restored to his ancient right." He requested them to raise him from his pallet; but whilst they were lifting him, his head sunk between his shoulders, his limbs became convulsed, his eyes fixed in their sockets, and a deep convulsed groan issuing from his breast—he expired.

The youth contemplated with a variety of emotions the lifeless corpse of the departed sir Bevis, and turning to lord Longford, who remained silent, threw himself before him, and, in a voice of grief, exclaimed, "O! do not regard me as a claimant to Lindisfarne, but look on me still as the orphan Fitz-Robert! I have no friend, if you reject me; no one to aid me with counsel or advice. Blessed spirits of my parents, hover over your child, and enable him to act as the descendant of St. Mar in the intricate path before him!"—The baron knelt beside him, and embracing him with fervour assured him of his counsel and friendship. "That I have been an usurper, (said he) was permitted by Providence for wise purposes. Had Richard bestowed the castle

on another, your claim, perhaps, might not have been so easily established." They then debated what steps they should take, and first determined to go to the village where his supposed parents died. He had been informed, on his return from the Crusade, that his mother had left a small box in the hands of the priest who confessed her. He had never yet claimed it; as, knowing their poverty, he imagined it contained nothing of consequence; but the hope of elucidating his birth, now made him consider it as a treasure. The priest, on being applied to, presented him with the deposit, which he had received from Bertha Fitz-Robert on her death-bed; and delivered to him at the same time a sealed paper, which he said was the confession she had made. It declared that her supposed son, Allen Fitz-Robert, who was then engaged in the Holy War, was only the child of her adoption; that seventeen years ago, her husband had brought home an infant, which he had found in the path that led towards their dwelling; that having no family of their own, they had nursed it with all the tenderness their poverty would allow, and possessing for him the affection of a parent, she had been unwilling to reveal the secret, lest he should leave them in search of his natural protectors; that she had carefully preserved the clothes he had on, as they might have led to a discovery, had there ever been any inquiry made about him; but having removed to a distant part of the country soon after this event, she supposed if any search had been made, it had been long since given up.

The trunk being opened, was found to contain a petticoat of white satin, very much soiled, the work of which exactly corresponded with that on the vest, that had been found in father Launcelot's cell, and a white cloth, which, they imagined, had served for a mantle. These invaluable and incontestible proofs of his birth the youth regarded with a melancholy delight; he reverted to his forlorn situation, when the peasant first saw him, and shuddered at his helpless state; he wept at the recollection of his parents, and sincerely lamented the unrelenting cruelty and sudden death of his perfidious uncle.

The baron advised their immediate presence at the court, and St. Mar (for by that name Longford exultingly address-

ed him) being in all things guided by his friend, forthwith consented to accompany him.

Richard rejoiced at his favourite's advancement, and confirmed him in his rightful honours: he presented him to his nobles as the baron St. Mar, and on the lord Longford bestowed the warmest commendations for his disinterested friendship.

They demanded their sovereign's permission to repair to the castle, where the baroness impatiently expected her lord; though she had been informed by a messenger, whom the baron had despatched from the monastery, that matters of importance prolonged his stay.

When they came within sight of the mansion, the youth turned apprehensively towards his friend. His emotion at beholding the place of his birth, from whence he had been taken a devoted victim, joined to a thousand conflicting passions that agitated his mind, became too powerful to be suppressed; and when they arrived at the gate, while the servant blew the horn, the young baron dismounted, and leaning against his friend, who had ran to his assistance, the tears streamed from his eyes; he clasped his hands in an agony, and invoked the spirits of his parents. The gates flew open to receive them; the baroness met them at the entrance of the castle, and her lord introduced her favourite Fitz-Robert, as Mortimer St. Mar, and owner of the mansion. She involuntarily drew back her offered hand, and with dignity demanded an explanation. The baron, led the way to the great hall, and then briefly informed her of the wonderful discovery that had been made, on which she held forth her hand, and with an air of majesty replied, "The friendship of Matilda was never lightly bestowed: nor can it easily be withdrawn."

Edwin partook of the joy that reigned in the castle; the bolted passage was repaired; and the chapel again resorted to by that communication; all apprehensions were banished from the mansion, as the Heir of the Castle was restored to his just right.

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